

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANAMA 01751 011829Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 /011 W
-----035119 011833Z /44
R 010900Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6481

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 1751

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, BA
SUBJECT: BAHRAINI ARMS REQUESTS

1. DURING JULY 31 FAREWELL CALL ON HEIR APPARENT/DEFENSE MINISTER I REVIEWED FOR HIM STATUS OF ALL OUTSTANDING ITEMS. HE WAS PLEASED TO LEARN THAT LOA ON LAW MISSILES IS IN THE MAIL AND UNDERSTOOD THAT HOLD UP ON 2.75 INCH ROCKETS IS TECHNICAL NOT POLITICAL. SEPTTEL WILL COVER NON-TRANSFER AGREEMENT ON AGUSTA-BELL HELICOPTERS.

2. ON I-HAWK I TOLD DEFMIN SHAIKH HAMAD THAT DELAY IN REPLY TO HIS REQUEST WAS NOT DUE TO INACTION BUT TO FACT THAT REQUEST HAS PRECIPITATED POLICY DISCUSSION IN WASHINGTON.. I GAVE IT AS MY OPINION THAT DISCUSSION IS CENTERING AROUND HIS REQUEST BECAUSE HE MADE REQUEST FOR I-HAWK IND TERMS REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR SECURITY, A CONCEPT WE HAVE FAVORED SINCE BRITISH WITHDREW EAST OF SUEZ. SHAIKH HAMAD SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THIS PERFECTLY WELL AND WAS PLEASED THAT IT IS BAHRAIN WHICH HAS PROMPTED USG TO RE-THINK WAYS IN WHICH IT PUTS ITS POLICIES INTO PRACTICE. HE REMINDED ME OF JOINT SAUDI-BAHRAINI MILITARY EXERCISE MORE THAN TWO YEARS AGO IN WHICH SAUDI LIGHTENING AIR-
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CRAFT AND SAUDI PARATROOPERS IN C-13/ AIRCRAFT, ALL UNDER BAHRAINI COMMAND, HELPED BAHRAINI BATTALION CONTAIN AND THEN CAPTURE OR DESTROY "ENEMY" FORCE WHICH HAD LANDED NEAR SOUTHERN TIP OF BAHRAIN.

3. SHAIKH HAMAD CONTINUED THAT SUCH COOPERATIVE DEFENSE ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD BE INCREASED AND EXPANDED INTO MORE

SOPHISTICATED AREAS, SUCH AS AIR DEFENSE. IT WAS INDEED WITHIN THIS CONTEXT THAT HE REQUESTED I-HAWK WHICH WOULD BE FULLY INTEGRATED WITH SAUDI I-HAWK IN EASTERN PROVINCE. THIS HE SAID WOULD GIVE BAHRAIN'S INSTALLATIONS COVERAGE AS WELL AS INCREASE EARLY WARNING TIME FOR SAUDIS. HE SAID HE HOPED USG WOULD SEE VALUE IN THIS PURELY DEFENSIVE ARRANGEMENT IN TERMS ITS OWN INTERESTS AND POLICIES. HE OPINED THAT SAUDIS AND BAHRAINIS COULD IN THIS REGARD SERVE AS EXPERIMENT WHICH MIGHT LATER BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE KUWAIT, QATAR, AND UAE. SHAIKH HAMAD ADDED THAT HE ALREADY HAS DISCUSSED WITH PRINCE SULTAN IDEA OF DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN BDF AND EASTERN PROVINCE OPS CENTERS.

FOWOB TOLD SHAIKH HAMAD THAT POLICY DISCUSSION STILL IN EARLY STAGES, THAT THERE WERE STRONG VIEWS IN WASHINGTON ON BOTH SIDES, AND THAT ANSWER TO HIS REQUEST LIKELY TO BE LONG IN COMING. I SAID ALSO THAT AT THIS STAGE I DID NOT BELIEVE WE HAD DISCUSSED ISSUE WITH SAUDIS. HE SAID HE HAD NOT DONE SO EXCEPT IN GENERAL SENSE OF HIS DESIRE FOR AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM: HE SAID HE HAD NOT MENTIONED I-HAWK. SHAIKH HAMAD SAID ANY DELAY IN HIS DEFENSE PLANNING IS UNFORTUNATE BUT THAT IF I-HAWK ISSUE IS IMPORTANT IN DEVELOPING USG ATTITUDE AND ACTIONS TOWARD REGIONAL DEFENSE ARRANGEMENT THEN HE WOULD OF COURSE BE AS PATIENT AS POSSIBLE.

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5. COMMENT: SHAIKH HAMAD OF COURSE HAS RATHER NEATLY HOISTED US ON THE PETARD OF OUR OWN POLICY BUT I FEEL HIS APPROACH IS REASONABLE AND SHOULD BE GIVEN A TRY. CLUVERIUS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMS, NEGOTIATIONS, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MANAMA01751
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780314-1178
Format: TEL
From: MANAMA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197808113/aaaadqov.tel
Line Count: 98
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e72b6b59-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY, STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY, STADIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1579561
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BAHRAINI ARMS REQUESTS
TAGS: MASS, BA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e72b6b59-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014